

Kaminsky Says He 'Spied' Only To Write Book

VIENNA, Oct. 18 (AP) — A young American tourist today said he was convicted of espionage in the Soviet Union after he admitted traveling through that country to gather material for a book on the Kremlin's preparations for war.

Mark I. Kaminsky, 28, whose family lives on a farm near Niles, Mich., arrived here last night from the Soviet Union, where he received a 7-year sentence Sept. 16 on spy charges. The Russians suspended the sentence and expelled Kaminsky and his traveling companion, Harvey C. Bennett, 26, of Bath, Maine.

"They told me it would be foolish not to plead guilty," Kaminsky told a news conference today. "They gave me a lawyer. He was not of much assistance, but he cheered me up. He advised me to confess to the charge wholeheartedly and tell the court I felt very remorseful. He stressed the part about 'remorseful time and again."

"I did not carry out espionage nor did I confess to espionage. I did confess though that I was getting material for a book."

Photographs Confiscated

He explained later that under Soviet law it is considered espionage to gather the material he collected—"such facts as that there are soldiers everywhere in Russia." He said the subject of the survey was: "The Soviet Union talks peace while preparing for war."

He added that he took pictures of soldiers, radio antennae and trains, but not for espionage purposes. The Russians confiscated the photographs.

Kaminsky, a big heavy-set man, said the Russians had treated him well, although they subjected him to questioning up to eight hours a day.

He said they extracted a promise from him not to write the book, but he wasn't certain what he would do now.

"It's not that I think promises made under duress don't count," he said. "I simply have not made up my mind."

Tass said Kaminsky admitted gathering information on troop concentrations, radio and power station locations, military camps and their approach. The two left by plane last night for Zurich. They plan to head on to New York Wednesday.

for use in a "slandorous book about the Soviet Union."

Tass also reported that Bennett denounced Kaminsky as a spy during the trial. Bennett denied this and said:

"I explained to the Russians that Mark was writing a book and that was why he gathered information. But I had to agree that this was not the sort of activity a normal tourist would do."

Both said they made the trip under scholarships of \$2000 each from the Northcraft Educational Fund in Philadelphia. A U. S. attorney for the Fund has refused to name the group's backers or give the location of its headquarters. Tass called it a "spy organization."

Bennett and Kaminsky were the latest in a series of American tourists arrested as spies this summer after the trial of U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers on espionage charges.

Mentioned Many Times

Kaminsky said Powers' name popped up many times during the questioning, but the Russians also were clearly afraid that his case might have a bad effect on American tourism in the Soviet Union.

"The treatment simply was too good," he said. "The guards fell over themselves to do things for me."

However, he added that when they tried to get in contact with the U. S. Embassy in Moscow the Russians took them to the telegraph office, "but they always failed to get us a connection."

Both Bennett and Kaminsky know Russian.

They rented a car in Helsinki, entered the Soviet Union July 27, and stopped at Leningrad, Moscow, Minsk, Kiev and Chop, the Czechoslovak border town where they were arrested Aug. 25, Kaminsky said.

They were detained in a hotel at Uzhgorod, near Chop, for nine days, then flown to Kiev, where Kaminsky was jailed and Bennett held under guard at a hotel as a witness.

The trial Sept. 16 began in the morning, and sentence was passed that night.

They were released on Oct. 13, crossed into Czechoslovakia yesterday and arrived in Austria last night.

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Associated Press

Two American tourists, Harvey C. Bennett, 26, at left, of Bath, Me., and Mark I. Kaminsky, 28, of Niles, Mich., shown at a news conference held in Vienna yesterday. Both men were expelled from the Soviet Union last week.

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